

# A reminder of days past

## Hilberry depicts Anne Frank

By JEFF SCHORR

"The Diary of Anne Frank," which opened in repertory at the Hilberry Theatre last week, kicks off Wayne State University's 17th graduate-level theater season with a production worthy of the fine heritage that company now enjoys.

Two guest actors play the adolescent roles in this Pulitzer Prize-winning dramatization by Albert Hackett and his wife, Frances Goodrich.

The story is about eight Jews crowded into the abandoned half of an office building in Amsterdam during World War II, hiding from Nazi Germany's occupation forces. Their existence is kept secret from mid-1942, until their discovery and deportation to concentration camps, 25 months later, on the brink of Allied victory.

Their story unfolds through the eyes and emotions of a young girl who is 13-years-old when she arrives and is given a diary by her father. Her world is the office warehouse for two years. The record of her thoughts, feelings and fears at being secretly trapped in the midst of a world at war become the story line.

Maryanne Ferenc

plays the title role with zest, skillfully portraying a willful, bright, mischievous young girl who displays remarkably intelligent, grown-up insight.

Director Anthony Schmitt brings out these varying personalities and moods which also range to stark terror and temper tantrums. Her reflections and confidences within her diary paint pictures of her family and friends.

The close people in her life include her father, Mr. Frank (Neil Thackerberry Jr.), mother, (Sara Morrison Barnicle); sister (Kristin Reeves-Beauchamp); Mr. Van Daan (Peter Van Wagner); Mrs. Van Daan, (Edith Taylor Hantley); and son Peter, the other adolescent (Duane Domutz). Mr. Dussel (Gerald B. Roe) joins them shortly after their arrival. The only other characters are their contacts with the outside world, Mr. Kraler (Buckner Gibbs) and Miep (Terri Turner Phillips).

The principal struggle in Ann's life is her father. Thackerberry, perhaps the best of the Hilberry company, does his usual fine job, but is somehow less than the elderly, concerned, well-respected father-figure one might

expect. In short, he appears too young.

Peter changes from an aggravation to a peer and friend, in Ann's eyes. She shares her thoughts and a young girl's first kiss in one tender scene. The parents of the two children reflect on the pressures and problems of people trapped together.

The entire cast plays creditable roles. However, Mr. and Mrs. Van Daan reflect more spirited emotion than the remarkably calm, more serene Frank family.

In one dramatic scene, however, when Mr. Van Daan is caught stealing food that everyone thought had been taken, Mrs. Frank breaks and angrily insists he leave, sharply revealing the pressures under which they were living.

A recorded voice-over of Anne smoothly blends one lead scene to the next and gives the historic background of the changing fortunes of war. It is sometimes hard to remember the things that have happened to our "civilized" world less than 40 years ago, and the forces that can be suddenly and tragically unleashed under certain circumstances.

"Diary" reminds us of the senseless loss that happened so recently.



Maryanne Ferenc stars as Ann Frank with Duane Domutz as Peter in the Hilberry Theatre presentation of "The Diary of Anne Frank." The production, which details the experiences of a young Jewish girl hiding from the Nazis during World War II, runs through January. For ticket information call 577-2972.

The Hilberry production is a moving, sensitive portrayal of man's inhumanity to man.

Anne, who wanted to be a writer when she grew up, also survived

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Members of the South Oakland County Chapter of Sweet Adelines are putting the final touches on their upcoming show, "A Toast to Dolly." The barbershop musical will be

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